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ABSTRACT

In resident outdoor education programs, students and their teachers attend an outdoor facility for two days or longer and use the outdoor environment as their primary classroom, focusing on natural sciences, outdoor recreation, social skills, and attitudinal and cognitive development. A resident program should have significant impact on social interactions and environmental attitudes of participants, and should flow from and back into the on-going classroom program. Most of the day at a resident center is devoted to activity sessions involving problem solving, multidisciplinary approaches, group interaction, field science, and outdoor skill development. Outdoor instruction includes use of small groups, emphasis on process of discovery rather than results, and teachers as guides rather than dispensers of information and as facilitators in group social growth. Considerable planning is necessary, with careful attention to site and personnel selection; program content, timing and length; student groupings; health and safety; classroom preparation; explanation of the program to parents; and funding. Follow-up to a program should review and reinforce program accomplishments and allow parents to share in the excitement. The overview, intended to explain to parents, teachers, students, and administrators the use of resident outdoor education as an effective educational tool, lists eight supplementary readings. (MH)

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A Resident Outdoor Education Primer

Learning to Live Within an Environment

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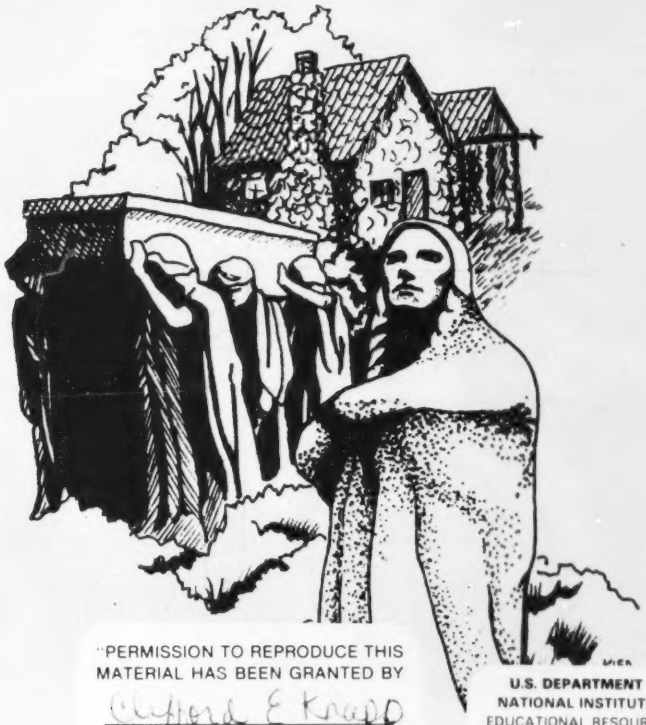

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Introduction

This booklet provides a concise, accurate, and readable overview of resident outdoor education. The interdisciplinary field of outdoor education often needs to be carefully explained and justified to those unfamiliar with this aspect of the curriculum. Despite the fact that schools have been actively engaged in conducting resident outdoor programs for more than fifty years, some individuals want and need more information. This booklet was written for parents, teachers, students, and administrators who are seeking an overview of the field. As the title states, this is a primer for those who want to explore the possibilities of learning outside of the school in a resident environment.

Andrew Nolen-Parkhouse is well qualified to write this primer. He has had years of practical experience as a teacher and administrator in outdoor education programs. After completing a master's degree in Outdoor Teacher Education at Northern Illinois University's Lorado Taft Field Campus, where this booklet was written, he left to assume the position of program director at Eagle Valley Environmentalists in Apple River, Illinois.

Clifford E. Knapp, Director
Lorado Taft Field Campus
April 1982

Foreword

A resident outdoor education program provides two unique opportunities to a school system. Students may pursue a course of study related to the natural world, in a natural area, for an extended period of time. The students also have the opportunity to interact socially with their peers and teachers in ways not possible during the average school day. The sub-title of this pamphlet, "Learning to Live Within an Environment," reflects these two advantages of resident outdoor programming. Children do not often have the chance to roam the wooded areas near their home communities, particularly in an atmosphere of guided learning. Neither do they associate with their classroom peers as a group in any situation other than the structured school world. Exposure to natural and social environments can lead to an appreciation of and respect for these different systems. Through experience, children may realize that they are not passive observers of these systems, but active actors and re-actors within their worlds.

This publication is written for those who wish to learn more about the possibilities of resident outdoor education. Teachers, administrators, camp directors, and parents may find this booklet a useful guide in gaining an understanding of this effective educational tool. As the title states, this is a primer, an introduction. Further information may be gathered by referring to the suggested reading page at the end of this booklet.

Scenes From A Program

☐ Julie asked the name of a flower for the third time. Instead of supplying the name, her instructor handed her a field guide with a few suggestions about how to look up her mystery flower. Within a few moments Julie found a picture of the plant and read the brief description to the other members of her group. She had discovered a new use for books and would remember that flower for a long while.

☐ The fire died to embers. The last guitar chord of "Kum Ba Yah" faded into the night. Following a few whispered instructions, eighty fifth-graders followed a leader quietly through the dark forest. The silence was not the quiet of coercion, nor the quiet of rapt attention, but the quiet of not needing to say anything.

☐ It took ten minutes, but Matt finally overcame his squeamishness and reached into a dip net full of rotted leaves and swamp muck. Carefully holding a small crayfish, he showed it to each member of his group, saying, "Look what I caught, look what I caught!"

☐ Terry, the class cut-up, explored the forest floor near the study group. All group members were seeking signs of spring. As he called out about the newly-emerging insects and young green shoots, his classmates gathered around and listened. He explained the significance of each find, noting why he knew winter was near an end. His classroom teacher, who was leading the group, discovered a great change in Terry's relationship with his peers in this new situation.

☐ "Good night, Mr. Sanders!", the twelve boys called out in unison as their teacher closed the door to their sleeping room. Kevin Sanders, walking towards his own bed, reflected on the new insights he was gaining about his students during the twenty-four hour day. The boys were similarly impressed with Mr. Sanders; it had never occured to them that he wore pajamas.

Programs and Centers—An Overview

The scenes described above represent some of the possibilities of a resident outdoor education program. Individually, they may be duplicated under other circumstances. However, taken as a whole, these scenes and others like them describe a unique contribution to the educational process.

For the purposes of this booklet, a resident outdoor education program occurs when a group of students and their teacher(s) attend a facility for two days or longer. These programs usually take place during the school year on regular school days. During their stay, the students and teachers use the outdoor environment as their primary classroom, pursuing suitable curricular objectives. A resident program lends itself to a wide variety of goals, depending on the surrounding natural area, the facility, the school staff, and the students. While such programs could be conducted in an urban area, they are generally situated in a relatively undisturbed environment away from the city.

Traditionally, these programs involve upper elementary students and focus heavily on the natural sciences, outdoor recreation, and social skills. A teacher with an interest in using the outdoor environment in a residential setting need not feel limited by these traditions. Older students can benefit from an exposure to field work at a more advanced level while younger students can develop positive attitudes regarding their peers and the natural world. In fact, if attitudinal development is a primary goal, such a program with younger children would likely by very effective.

A resident program may best be viewed as a retreat, an escape from the routines of regular day-to-day life to deal with specific goals. Businessmen with a problem to solve often seek a secluded place where they may devote all of their time and energies to that problem. A church group may do the same to pursue spiritual matters and recreation. If a classroom teacher feels that their class could better deal with a situation or topic in an outdoor setting, then a resident program should be considered. It should be borne in mind that such a program involves a great commitment of time, energy, and resources; the goals and objectives of the program should be carefully considered in light of these expenditures.

A myriad of considerations arise when choosing a site. The available options may range from an unstaffed group of rustic buildings to modern, air-conditioned facilities with support services and enough professional staff to instruct over one hundred students in learning groups of ten or less. The final choice depends upon individual circumstances; no one type of facility is inherently better than another. Two primary considerations are travel time to the site and specific, facility-related program goals and objectives. Bus travel is expensive and should be kept as short as possible. If it is deemed necessary to attend a center which can provide professional instruction to the group, then choices are further limited. If a group desires to study wetland ecology, a site must be found which has a suitable natural area. These and other considerations will be discussed in the section on site selection. Primary concerns are the goals and objectives of the program.

KLEP

Goals and Objectives

School children today seldom interact with their classmates as a group or with their natural surroundings. The goals and objectives of resident programming often reflect this. Many children seldom sit down for a meal with their families or participate with any groups other than their close friends. Classroom projects often center on individual, solitary work. A resident program provides the opportunity for students to develop the skills of living with their friends and classmates.

One of the major goals of outdoor education—knowledge of and respect for the workings of natural systems—cannot be fully met in the classroom. Knowledge of the parts of a flower or the components of the hydrologic cycle is a first step in understanding, followed by an application of that knowledge in a theoretical situation. Appreciation of an object or concept, however, can best be fostered through direct involvement with the object of study.

Whatever the specific goals of a specific program, a resident program will have a significant impact on the social interactions and environmental attitudes of the participants. This impact may be negative or positive and it is the obligation of those planning the program to carefully consider the attitudinal and social effects of the experience. An unpleasant episode in the forest could leave a student with negative feelings toward areas of that type. Lack of guidance in the dormitories or dining hall could lead to poor relationships among the students. Planning and supervision are imperative to assure the successful attainment of these two implicit goals of resident outdoor education.

The overt objectives of a program need not relate directly to the social or attitudinal realms. An adventure/outdoor skills program may be designed to enhance the self-esteem of individual students. A science-oriented experience may lead to an in-depth understanding of ecological concepts. A multi-disciplinary program may reinforce and supplement many curricular areas in a new environment. These, and other options, will be discussed in forthcoming sections; it is important to recognize that they proceed in concert with the two areas mentioned above.

All resident experiences represent a melding of cognitive, social, and attitudinal aims. Whether some goals are emphasized while others are left implicit may depend upon the individual circumstances of the school community. Some communities readily accept social aims as legitimate curricular concerns; others might insist upon a cognitive emphasis. A program cannot exist without the support and approval of the parents and school administration. The stated goals of a resident program should reflect the need for this support.

Ideally, an outdoor experience should flow from and back into the on-going classroom program. In-class preparation and follow-up often make the difference as to whether long-range goals are accomplished. A resident program consists mainly of planned and unplanned experiences and it is necessary to provide a framework for those experiences before the program and an opportunity to draw conclusions from the experiences afterward.

Activity Sessions

Most of the day at a resident center is devoted to activity sessions. These blocks of time may range from ten minutes to many hours and may be organized according to a wide range of criteria. Group size may range from less than ten students to three or more classroom groups. The brief descriptions below exemplify different foci for activity organization. They are not all appropriate for all situations and should be based upon the goals and objectives of the program.

Problem Solving—An entire program may be based upon open-ended problem solving. Exploration of a novel environment using all disciplines develops skills which may be used by the students throughout their lives. Given the assignment of discovering as much as possible about an old building foundation or other site of past human activity, students could pursue many directions. Using field biology skills, the participants could identify plants in the area to determine which might have been planted in earlier times. The age of trees on the site could indicate when the location was last used. Research in a local library and interviews with community elders use the skills of a historian. Constructing a grid, digging, sifting, identifying artifacts, and labeling collections allow the students to become amateur archaeologists. Mathematics may be used in constructing an accurate map of the dig. The group could then summarize their findings in a dramatic presentation or a creative writing exercise depicting life at the time the site was used. Participating in the crafts of that era would give a further appreciation of life in the past. It should be apparent that an entire week could be devoted to a single, carefully chosen problem.

Multi-disciplinary—A multi-disciplinary program reinforces and supplements different curricular areas using the resources of the out-of-doors. While all of the skills used in the problem-solving focus described above can be utilized, they are often organized into separate subject areas. Language arts could involve a two-hour period in which students use the natural environment as a stimulus for poetry writing. Science could center on the collection and identification of aquatic insects for the purpose of studying the concept of adaptation. Art might be approached through making stationery using leaf prints. Mapping a hillside would reinforce geometry and arithmetic skills. Nearly all subject areas can be included in ways which introduce or reinforce the school curriculum.

Social Focus—Most activities involve human interaction and thus have an impact on social skills. Many activities are explicitly designed to enhance personal and social growth. Perhaps the most common focus is on group living, with cooperation and consideration as the major goals. Successful group living entails numerous small chores and responsibilities. Bus loading, dormitory clean-up, and table-setting are more effectively completed by small groups for the benefit of the entire community. Clear and fair division of responsibility in these areas can help the students realize that all members are doing their share of the work. Guidance and discussion may lead to the realization that chores are opportunities to help the community rather than onerous burdens.

Cooperation and consideration may be directly approached through group initiative activities. These sessions confront a group of students with a challenge, such as getting the entire group over a ten-foot wall or lining up silently according to age while blindfolded. These activities require cooperation for their successful completion and provide insights for the instructor about the social interactions of the group. It is imperative that the group leader involve students in discussions following each initiative. This feedback is the key element which allows the students to see themselves as others see them and to learn from their mistakes and successes.

A more intense approach to personal and social growth is adventure-risk activity. Rock climbing or an elevated ropes course can be used safely with properly trained staff. Overcoming perceived risk with the support of one's peers can lead to group cohesiveness and personal feelings of accomplishment. Needless to say, such activities should be conducted only under the direct supervision of a trained professional. Many resident centers have these personnel on their staffs and arrangements can be made for them to lead such activities.

Even though the program planners might decide that they will not focus on social development, they should consider the social impact of their program structure and content. An impact will be felt whether planned or not.

Field Science—While most subject areas can be easily approached in an outdoor environment, field science and ecology often constitute a major prog.am focus because their content area *is* the out-of-doors. A series of activities could progress from the simple to the complex. An initial study of animal eating habits could lead to the study of adaptation and predator-prey relationships. Plant identification skills, once developed, may be used to discover the concept of succession.

Perhaps the most appropriate introduction to the natural world is through sensory awareness. Through exploring the forest blindfolded or focusing on a microenvironment with a hand lens, students can gain some perceptual skills which will prove valuable in many future learning situations. Field identification as a skill has many uses in pursuing other goals. As a subject in its own right, identification has little relevance to most students. Collecting and identifying ten leaves or flowers is of little use to students unless that knowledge is applied to some further educational purpose.

Time or Season—Daily or seasonal changes are easily observable and provide clear examples of some forms of causality in the natural world. Measuring local environmental conditions at different times of the day and night can yield clues about why certain animals are active at certain times. Seasonal changes, while not as easily detected, provide a suitable topic for outdoor investigation.

Skill Development—Many children possess few skills for existing comfortably in a wilderness area. While many outdoor skills are frequently approached in recreational programs, they may also be incorporated into school-sponsored activities. Hiking, fire-building, outdoor cooking, and the use of map and compass are skills which could be approached either separately or within a broad series of survival activities. Map and compass work provides a medium for reinforcing classroom geometry lessons while imparting useful outdoor knowledge.

Optional Activities—Any of the activity formats described above may be incorporated into a series of selections from which the participants may choose. It may be appropriate at some time to offer choices ranging from a quiet craft activity to an active hike.

Methods of Outdoor Instruction

The primary function of outdoor education is to bring the learner into meaningful and direct contact with the object of study. Some topics lend themselves particularly well to the out-of-doors. A rule of thumb is that if a subject can be successfully pursued through a process of guided discovery in the outdoors, then it may be appropriately taught there. In plant identification, the use of an identification key is easily learned and practiced in a natural environment. However, the names of flower parts would be better introduced in the classroom. If, in planning a lesson, a teacher feels a need to impart a great deal of information, then he or she should find a way to give that information in the classroom and then apply it later, outdoors. The natural environment is mostly a place for experiences, not lectures.

Generally speaking, an outdoor class is smaller than an indoor classroom group. Often, groups will walk along narrow trails or gather around a specific tree. The logistics of teaching outdoors suggest that small groups of between ten and fifteen may be ideal. Safety considerations also require a smaller student to staff ratio, particularly in rough terrain or near water.

The concern with the *process* of discovery may legitimately replace the *results* of that process as an educational goal. Skills for learning how to learn about an environment are extremely valuable and may be generalized to other environments. Thus the main function of the outdoor teacher is often that of a guide, not a dispenser of information. Once the students have the necessary background information, they should be able to use their own skills to arrive at their own answers.

Solving problems in small groups often affects the social relationships within the groups. Guidance in discussion and decision-making skills constitutes an important addition to the problem-solving capabilities of the students. Most children do not possess these vital skills to any great degree; the arts of compromise, letting others speak, and respecting the wishes of the majority are best learned through a process of feedback. If the instructor can create a supportive atmosphere in which the students express their feelings without fear, the process of growth will have begun. The teacher becomes a facilitator of the group process. Social growth does not just happen; assistance is needed in the study groups, in the dining hall, and in the dormitories.

The methodology of instruction also affects student attitudes. Attitudes about the outdoor environment are affected by how that environment is studied. Indiscriminate picking of flowers for a craft project or for identification purposes often imparts an exploitive attitude towards living things. Careful and considerate use of natural objects often imparts an attitude of stewardship and reverence. Activities such as turning over rocks, leaving an established trail, gathering firewood, or making leaf prints should be approached in a way which considers the potential negative as well as positive impacts of these activities.

Pre-Planning

A well-planned resident outdoor education experience entails a considerable amount of work before the bus leaves the school. This section provides a listing of areas to be considered before starting a program.

The first question for someone considering a resident experience is, "Do I need to do this in order to accomplish my objectives?" As discussed above, some goals are uniquely suited to a resident program. If the goals may be met by a series of short field trips away from school, then a resident program may be unnecessary. If the goals are appropriate to the resident situation, a further question to be posed is, "Are these goals worth the time and expense of an extended trip?" In other words, does the importance of the goals match the effort expended? If other, more important goals can be met using that effort in a different direction, then a resident program may be inappropriate. If the objectives are both appropriate for a resident stay and important enough to justify the effort, then the planning begins.

Site Selection—If the school district owns or contracts with a resident center, then no decision need be made about site selection. If not, the goals of the program should be examined to determine the site requirements. If the school desires a center with a professional staff to aid in instruction, then the choice is narrowed. In fact, unless the school is located in a well-populated area, the choice may be extremely limited. If there is a choice, a visit should be made to each site and the facilities and land should be examined, as well as the types of assistance available from the resident staff. The food service deserves a very close look; poor food or inadequate por-

tions can negate the positive effects of an entire program.

A school which plans on providing its own instructional staff has more site options. Often, the decision to staff one's own program is primarily economic because a fully-staffed program has a much higher per-person cost. Many summer camps now have year-round facilities and are actively seeking school groups. These facilities will generally employ an outdoor education coordinator who makes arrangements for meals, dormitories, equipment, and other services.

After considering a number of sites, the school will probably discover that some of their program decisions will be made by selecting a particular site. Some centers will only lease their facilities for fixed blocks of time, either Monday through Friday or for half of that period. Others will insist upon cafeteria or family-style food service. Dormitory groups may be decided by the limitations of the facility—either many students in one large room or many groups spread out in smaller quarters. Many centers will insist upon a minimum total enrollment, so that they may better meet their overhead costs. This restriction might necessitate combining a program with another school. All of the above factors may call for some compromise. Seldom will a facility meet all of the needs of a particular school. The camp with the beautiful marsh might need to be rejected so that the students can eat their meals family-style.

Personnel—If the school chooses a fully-staffed resident outdoor education center, they have fewer staffing considerations. Some centers are set up so that the students are instructed, fed, and supervised by a professional staff; the teachers need have no instructional or supervisory responsibilities at all. These programs are uncommon however; most centers will provide support services only or a partial staff. The school staff completes the instructional team. Most schools desire additional staff so that their students may participate in small instructional groups. This need has been met by different schools in a variety of ways. Parents can be recruited and trained in leading certain activities. Parent instructors have the advantage of securing additional community support for a program. Some parents may become so enthusiastic about teaching that they will return the next year even though their children are no longer attending the program. A second alternative is to recruit high school aides from within the school system. Responsible students are often released from their regular studies to assist in programs of this nature. While high school students may not be very effective as instructors, with proper training they may help with supervision and thus enable the classroom teachers to lead larger groups in the field. Another option is to recruit student teachers from a college or university teacher-training program. Although most undergraduates are not thoroughly trained in outdoor education techniques, they can provide an enthusiastic group of instructors if they are given adequate time and resources to prepare their activity plans.

Sources of staff training are varied. Many states have associations of outdoor educators which conduct periodic workshops. Many resident centers offer occasional workshops to the schools attending their facilities. More and more colleges and universities are offering courses in outdoor education. A local nature center might be willing to assist in training an inexperienced staff to develop some activities. The school faculty itself may have an experienced outdoor teacher. All of these sources should be explored in developing a school-staffed program. Many books and other materials have been developed which can provide outdoor lesson plan ideas in different content areas. While many good ideas may be obtained from printed matter, there is no substitute for a well-led workshop to gain skills in the methodology of outdoor education.

Program Content—The actual content of the activity sessions will depend to some extent upon the expertise of the staff and the natural resources of the facility. The subject matter may flow uninterrupted from the classroom or it may be a special, isolated experience with just enough classroom preparation and follow-up to make the program meaningful. School personnel should decide upon activities and program structure which reflect their pre-determined objectives. The actual program is a matter of professional judgment and cannot be defined or limited in this primer.

Program Timing and Length—The time of the year of the program may be determined by site availability. If a choice exists, different needs may be met at different times of the year. Some teachers prefer to start the school year with a resident experience so that their students may better get to know each other and develop a cohesiveness which lasts throughout the year. Other teachers prefer a mid-year date so that they have time to introduce academic subjects and then follow up after the program. The last portion of the school year is often requested by those who view a program as an end-of-the-year culmination for themselves and their students. Others may need a late date so that they have time for class fund-raising projects. All seasons have their advantages and disadvantages. Warm weather is accompanied by biting insects, the beauty of winter comes with the biting cold, spring wildflowers come out with the mud. The season will have an impact upon program content or vice versa, most communities change with the months.

Five days is the upper limit of most school programs, although it would be possible to combine two five-day blocks of time for a longer program. Two days is usually the lower limit of a resident stay. A final decision can be made by considering cost, program goals, and the policies of the center.

Student Groupings—The students attending a resident program will be intensely involved with each other. At the dining hall tables, in the dormitory, and out in the field; students will be rubbing elbows and exchanging views. The specific groups of school children are usually arranged by the classroom teacher. Most teachers are familiar with those combinations of their pupils which should be avoided and those combinations which will facilitate a pleasant experience. The social goals of a program will determine the extent to which the program planner wishes to structure the groups.

Many teachers will carefully choose study groups while allowing the children to pick their own dormitory or dining hall groups. Some will use sociograms to make sure that every child has one friend of their own choice in a group. Cliques are generally separated. Slow learners can often benefit from participation in a study group with those students who will take time to help them. The small group is the basic unit of the program; the combinations of children in these groups can determine their success or failure.

Funding—A resident program can involve three sets of costs: transportation, instruction, and room and board. In some districts all of these fees are borne by the school system; in others, none. If it is necessary to assess the families of the students for the cost of the program, a few options are available. A class fund-raising project can often pay for a portion of the costs, thereby lowering the per-student cost. Parent-teacher organizations will often put up some scholarship money so that no student need stay home because of an inability to pay. Students who have worked for all or part of the trip cost will often feel more involved in the program, they will certainly check closely on the quality and quantity of food.

Health and Safety—Planning a resident program involves anticipating those health and safety circumstances which will hopefully never occur. Some centers will have a resident nurse; most will have a doctor or nurse on call. It is important that a few adults, either from the center or the school, have a working knowledge of and certification in first aid procedures.

The following information and forms should be gathered well before the program begins. Each child must have a form signed by a parent or guardian which gives permission for emergency medical treatment. Often, release forms may be obtained from the emergency room nearest to the center. These forms allow for emergency medical care even if the parents are not available. Without this form, all but life-sustaining measures may be denied by doctors until the parents can be reached.

Each child should also have a complete medical history on file at the center during the program. Of particular importance are allergies,

any medications currently taken by the student, and any condition about which a doctor or nurse should know if giving treatment. These forms should accompany any person who leaves the center. All adults involved in the program should complete the same medical history forms. All of these health forms should be read by a nurse, who then composes an alert list for the staff. This list would cite any children who might need special attention during the program. A hike through the woods is not the appropriate place to learn that a child is subject to seizures.

A further form, or a clause in one of the above forms, gives permission for the classroom teacher or the camp nurse to administer non-prescription medication.

Some schools will require parents to sign a waiver of liability before any trip. The waivers have questionable legal standing and may cause concern to some parents because of the technical terms and frightening implications.

Most schools and outdoor education centers carry extensive insurance which should cover injuries during the program. The waivers have questionable legal standing and may cause concern to some parents because of the technical terms and frightening implications.

Most schools and outdoor education centers carry extensive insurance which should cover injuries during the program. The leader of the program should verify this coverage as a matter of course.

Planning for safety mostly requires common sense. Students should never be out in the field unsupervised. First aid kits should be carried on extended trips. Special care is required near dangerous water. If organized water activities, such as boating or swimming, are conducted, they should follow the guidelines of an established organization. The American Red Cross and the American Camping Association both publish guidelines for the safe conduct of such activities. Following well established procedures will assure reasonable safety and limit personal liability in the event of an accident.

The health of the students depends primarily upon adequate food, rest and proper clothing. Rest may be assured by scheduling reasonable hours and supervising the dormitories. Younger children may need a rest period during the day. Some students may encounter unfamiliar foods and should be encouraged to eat reasonable portions. Most centers will attempt to provide alternatives at each meal, any students with unusual diets should bring enough food to supplement the meals provided. Strict vegetarian or kosher diets cannot be accommodated at most centers. Proper clothing demands constant attention because most children are not accustomed to spending long periods of time outdoors. Raincoats, boots, and hats are imperative in most areas during much of the year. Prolonged exposure to wet, fifty-degree weather can kill if the body is not protected. In heavy rain or snow, proper footwear is also necessary for the health and comfort of the participants.

Explaining the Program—The initiation of a new program at a school usually arouses considerable attention. Hopefully the teachers have considered all of the previously discussed materials in light of their home community. Often the school administration needs assurance that the program is safe, academically sound, and will not interfere with the established school curriculum. Perhaps the most convincing, "selling," experience would be for the administrators to visit an established program and to talk to the participants from the schools attending it.

The parents may need a considerable amount of convincing, particularly if such a program is a first-time venture for the community. Often the center will have a slide program which they will show to parents. Pictures of warm dormitories, a well-run dining hall, and smiling children participating in outdoor activities can give a good understanding of the proposed program while alleviating most concerns. If the teachers have done their homework, few reasonable questions from parents should remain. The students themselves will need little convincing of the value of a resident program.

Despite the most effective explanations and presentations, it may occur that some students are unable to participate in the program. Because the experience involves time above and beyond normal school hours, few schools require attendance. Provision should be made for these students to continue with their school program while the rest of the class is at the center.

Classroom Preparation—Once the students know about the program, it will be a frequent topic of discussion. Any fund-raising efforts should begin as soon as possible. The children should receive a list of things to bring and a list of things not to bring. If a quiet atmosphere is desired, radios should be discouraged. New or fancy clothes are inappropriate. Certain items should be checked in advance. A dress rehearsal for a rainy day will bring to light many misconceptions about proper wet-weather gear. Those students who do not own an adequate raincoat should be encouraged to buy or borrow one.

The activity sessions should be planned and any necessary instruction begun. Vocabulary lists could be introduced and reinforced on short walks around the school grounds. Investigative tools such as compasses and soil test kits may be introduced.

After considering all of the elements described in the preceding pages, the program should run smoothly. No description of an actual program is given in this paper because the variations in experiences are so great. Each program is unique.

Follow-Up

After a successful program is completed, the students will have accumulated hundreds of new experiences. If the classroom returns to pre-program normalcy, the effect of the program is usually great. Reinforcement and expansion of the experiences will, however, multiply their impact. The events of the program can be reviewed and generalizations can be built from facts. The feeling of group accomplishment can be recaptured and enjoyed.

An evening presentation by the students with slides of the program will generate additional support for future programs and will allow the parents to share in the excitement.

Summary

The ideas presented on the preceding pages have been organized to express the potentials of resident outdoor education and the work involved in setting up a program. The social, attitudinal, and cognitive development of students may be changed for the better through a well-planned and properly run program. If something is missing from these pages it is the magic of students learning to live in an environment. The reader will need to supply the magic. It's there—outside.

Further Readings

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